

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS AGENDA Monday, April 8, 2024

Decatur City Hall City Commission Meeting Room 509 North McDonough Street 7:30 P.M.

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes from the February 12, 2024, meeting.

Approval of Minutes from the March 11, 2024, meeting,

III.Old Business

A. Derek Bigham, property owner, has applied for a variance from setback and height requirements for the property located at 102 5th Avenue, Decatur, GA 30030. This item has been redacted per its approval at the March 11th ZBA Meeting.

IV. New Business

A. Matthew Morton, agent, has applied for a variance from the setback requirements for the properties located at 608, 612, 616, 620 Commerce Drive, Decatur GA 30030.

V. Reports and Other Business

None

VI. Adjourn

VARIANCE APPLICATION

Planning & Zoning 2635 Talley Street Decatur, GA 30030 Phone 404-377-6198 Fax 404-378-5054



Attach a survey of the property drawn to scale and showing the following information. Please provide one full-size copy of all plans, as well as one copy of all plans in an 8¹/_x x 11^s format. It is helpful to show floor plans and elevations of proposed building improvements, as well as a letter of support from adjacent property owners. If the applicant is not the current property owner, provide a notarized authorization for this application from the current property owner. See the stream variance submittal checklist for additional requirements for stream variances.

1. all property lines with dimensions

2. location of buildings and other structures, creeks and easements referenced to property lines

- 3. north arrow, scale, lot and block numbers and land lot
- 4. topographic and drainage information if pertinent

Address of property 612 Commerce Dr		Decatur, GA 30030
Name of applicant Matthew Morton	Phone <u>508-314-2665</u>	
Address 1056 Standard Dr NE, Brookhaven GA 30319	City/state/ZIP 30319	
Email matthew.adam.morton@gmail.com		
Name of property owner Commerce Fine Homes LLC	Phone 508-314-2665	
Address 1056 Standard Dr NE, Brookhaven GA 30319	_ City/state/ZIP 30319	
Current zoning of property <u>R-60</u>	<u>_</u>	
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Please answer all of the following questions on a separate sheet.

1. What is the variance requested? What code requirement do you wish to vary from?

- 2. What are the special conditions relating to the specific piece of property in question (narrowness, shallowness, shape, topography, or other extraordinary and exceptional situation)?
- 3. Explain how the application of the zoning ordinance to this specific piece of property results in peculiar, extraordinary and practical difficulties?
- 4. Are the circumstances or conditions applying to the building or land in question peculiar to the premises? Do they apply generally to other land or buildings in the vicinity?
- 5. Explain why the granting of this variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a property right and does not merely serve as a convenience to the applicant.
- 6. Did the condition for which the variance is sought result from an action by the applicant?
- Explain how the variance will affect the supply of light and air to adjacent property, the traffic on public streets, the danger of fire, the public safety and established property values.
- 8. Explain how the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Decatur land use plan.
- 9. Will the granting of the variance allow a structure or use in a district restricted against such structure or use?

I hereby certify that the above and attached statements and documents are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Applicant signature _	VIT	MAS	Date	2/1	14024	de Nulla
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Variance Application

608, 612, 616, and 620 Commerce Dr Decatur, GA 30030

1. What is the variance requested? What code requirement do you wish to vary from?

The requested variance is a reduction of the front setback from 30 feet (under R-60 zoning) to 5 feet and the side setbacks to 5 feet on each side of the property.

2. What are the special conditions relating to the specific piece of property in question (narrowness, shallowness, shape, topography, or other extraordinary and exceptional situation)?

608, 612, and 616 Commerce Dr are all only 70 feet deep. In addition, the lots are heavily wooded, particularly in the rear of the lots. The combined shallowness of the lots and location of trees makes it difficult to have sufficient space to build a livable structure on each lot.

3. Explain how the application of the zoning ordinance to this specific piece of property results in peculiar, extraordinary and practical difficulties?

Combined with the shallowness of the lots and the position of trees, the existing setbacks under the R60 zoning and the tree preservation ordinances do not allow sufficient space to build a livable structure.

4. Are the circumstances or conditions applying to the building or land in question peculiar to the premises? Do they apply generally to other land or buildings in the vicinity?

The circumstances are unique to these lots. The only other structure on Commerce Dr on the block currently has a 10 foot setback from Commerce Dr. There are no other lots within the immediate vicinity known to have this circumstance.

5. Explain why the granting of this variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a property right and does not merely serve as a convenience to the applicant.

Without the variance the lots are functionally unbuildable meaning the lots cannot be used for their residential purpose. The ability to use a residential lot for residential purposes is a fundamental property right that is lacking without this variance.

6. Did the condition for which the variance is sought result from an action by the applicant?

No. The lots have been in this configuration for a long time. The current lot configuration is the result of eminent domain, which reduced the lot depth by 30 feet, taking the front 30 feet of the property to expand Barry Street/Commerce Drive.

7. Explain how the variance will affect the supply of light and air to adjacent property, the traffic on public streets, the danger of fire, the public safety and established property values.

A change to the front setback should provide better light and air flow for the adjacent properties as it will provide more space between structures than the current setbacks allow. It will not create any substantial change to traffic, fire risk or public safety. The change to the setback enabling use of the land with subsequent construction should help increase neighboring property values.

8. Explain how the granting of the variance will be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the Decatur land use plan.

There is only one other building on the block on Commerce Dr which currently has a 10 foot setback. Continuing beyond the nearest intersection, there are townhouses on the immediate next block that have a setback of 10 feet or less. Granting this setback will create harmony and a unified visual appeal to the block. The intended structures to be built match the current zoning and the addition of residential structures will complete the block improving the neighborhood feel within the city center.

In addition to providing harmony with the existing structures on the street there are four main benefits to reduced setbacks

- I. A reduced setback will enable better tree preservation, allowing construction further from existing trees.
- II. A reduced setback enables construction closer to the slope, which combined with the intended use of a basement structure, will lead to reduced land disturbance when building the basement
- III. Building closer to the street increases the buffer space between the rear neighbors, reducing noise and other disturbance for adjacent properties
- IV. Studies have shown that buildings closer to the street promote walkability and an improved cityscape by providing "eyes on the street" and creating a more urban cityscape. This will support pedestrian safety and promote walkability in the area.
 - 9. Will the granting of the variance allow a structure or use in a district restricted against such structure or use?

No. There are no structures or uses planned in a district restricted against such structure or use.

Letter of Intent In Support of Request for Variance 608, 612, 616, and 620 Commerce Dr, Decatur GA 30030

This Letter of Intent is in support of the request for a variance to the front and side setback requirements for the lots at 608, 612, 616 and 620 Commerce Dr. The intention is to build a 4-unit Walk Up Flat on 620 Commerce Dr, a Duplex on 616 Commerce Dr, and a 4-unit Walk Up Flat on the combination of 608 and 612 Commerce Dr. Under the current R-60 zoning the front setback of 30 feet and the side setback is 10 feet. These lots are also heavily wooded. In an effort to preserve trees, minimize the impact to the rear neighbors, and allow sufficient buildable space we are seeking to reduce the front and side setbacks to 5 feet.

The lots at 608, 612, and 616 Commerce Dr face a unique set of circumstances. Having given the front 30 feet of the lots to the conversion/expansion of Barry Street to Commerce Dr, they do not have sufficient space to build a liveable structure with the existing setbacks. Within the immediate cross-streets, there is only one other building on the block on Commerce Dr which currently has a 10 foot setback. Immediately to the south of the intersection at E. Ponce De Leon Ave there is a row of townhouses with a 5 foot setback from Commerce Dr and a 0 foot side setback from E Ponce de Leon Ave. Granting this setback will create harmony and a unified visual appeal to the block. The intended structures to be built match the current zoning requirements and the addition of residential structures will complete the block improving the neighborhood feel within the city center.

Developers have previously sought to change the zoning, increase density and increase building height. This would require significant land disturbance, would impact many of the trees on the lots, and create a greater disturbance to adjacent properties. In contrast, our proposed structures, with the requested variance, will have a positive impact on the neighborhood and environment. The four key benefits are:

- Better tree preservation, allowing construction further from the existing trees. Our goal is to maintain the existing canopy as much as possible, in alignment with the City of Decatur's goals. The trees are primarily located at the rear of the lot. Reducing the front and side setback to allow buildings to be built closer to the street will enable significantly more trees to be protected.
- II. Reduced land disturbance will be made possible with a reduced setback that allows construction closer to the slope, further reduced with the intended use of a basement structure.
- III. Maintained buffer between the rear neighbors, reducing noise and other disturbances for adjacent properties. Maintaining the buffer and preserving trees will reduce disturbance between properties and improve privacy.
- IV. Improved walkability and cityscape. Studies have shown that buildings closer to the street promote walkability and an improved cityscape by providing "eyes on the street"

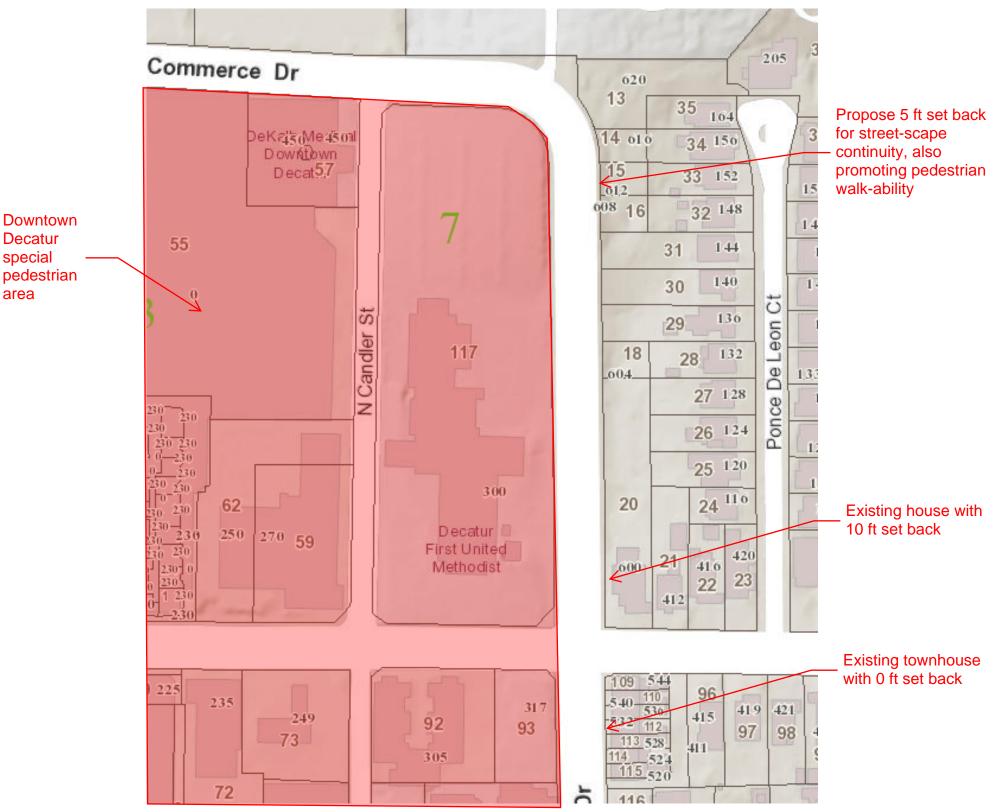
and creating a more urban cityscape. This will support pedestrian safety and promote walkability in the area.

In addition to the above reasons, new construction, increased walkability, and an improved cityscape have a history of increasing property values for the neighborhood. As a result, this project will support an overall increase in property value and tax base created by the improvements.

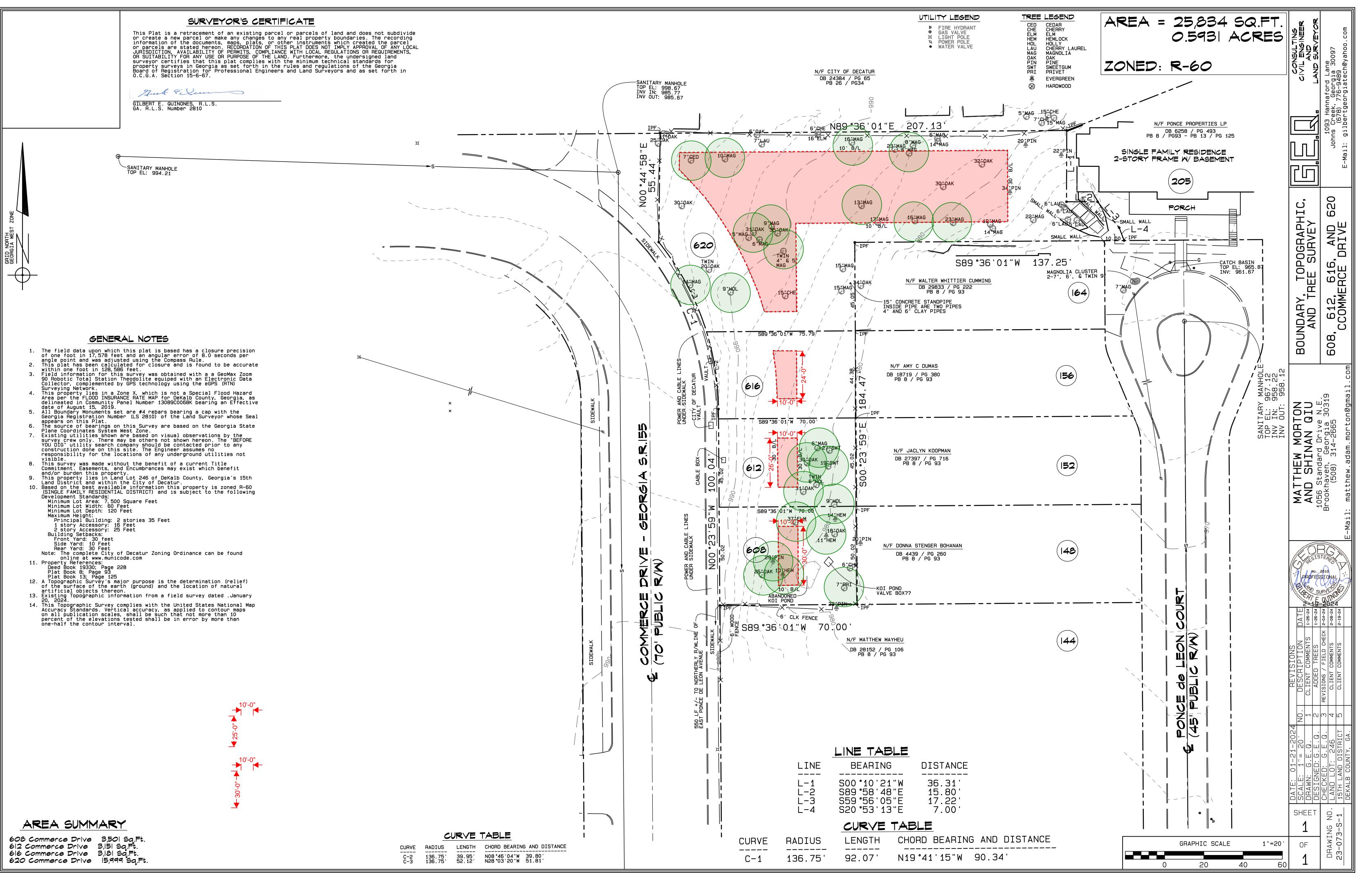
Thank you for your consideration.

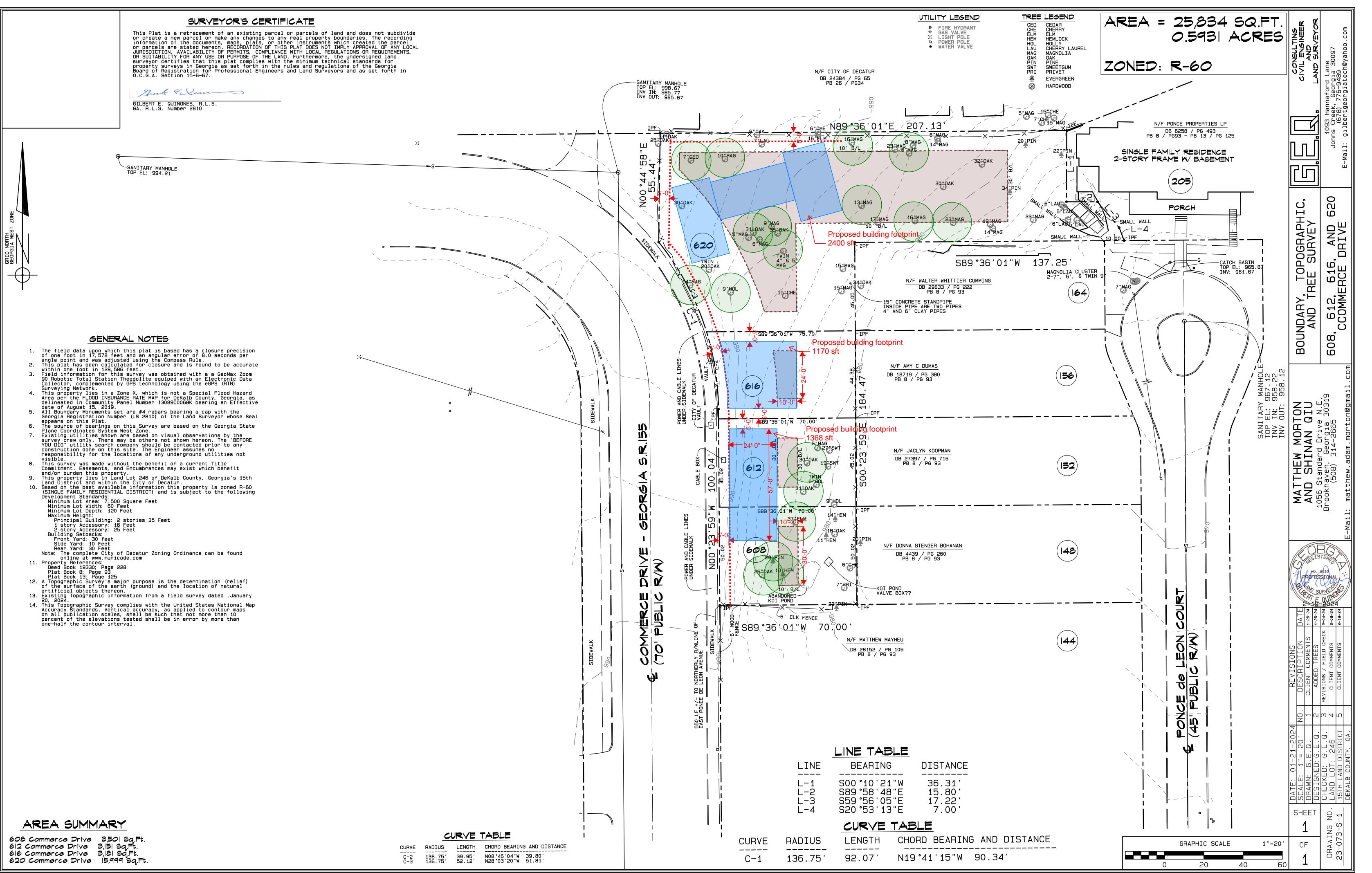
Respectfully submitted,

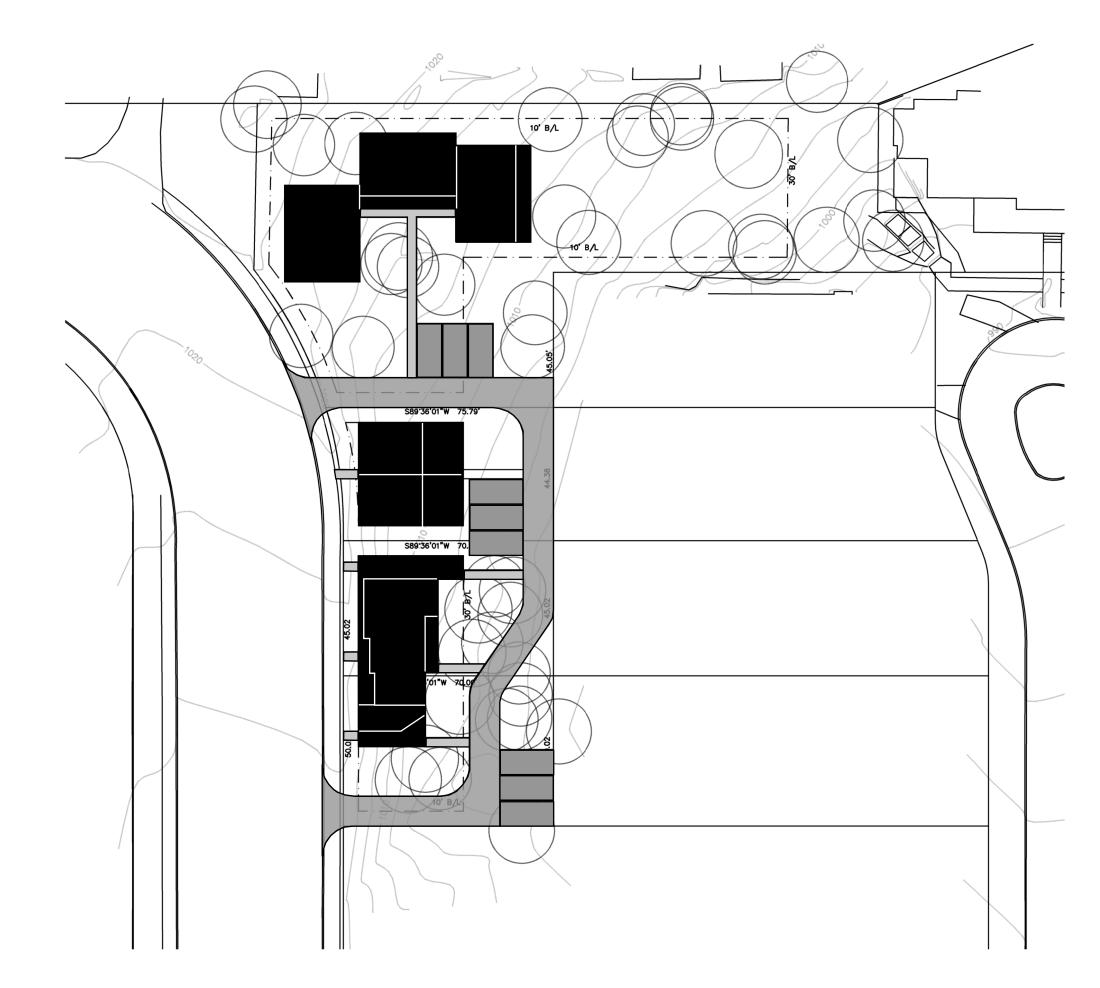
Matthew Morton Commerce Fine Homes LLC



Decatur special pedestrian area







BUILDING A - 4 UNITS

FOOTPRINT	2400 SFT
ABOVE GRADE	4800 SFT
BASEMENT	1800 SFT
EACH UNIT	1600 SFT
STORIES	2

BUILDING B - 2 UNITS

FOOTPRINT ABOVE GRADE 1250 SFT BASEMENT EACH UNIT STORIES

1200 SFT 1200 SFT 1225 SFT 2

BUILDING C - 4 UNITS

FOOTPRINT ABOVE GRADE 2660 SFT BASEMENT EACH UNIT STORIES

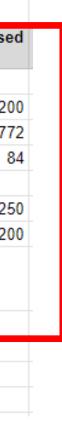
1640 SFT 1640 SFT 1075 SFT 2

CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN 1/32"=1'-0"

UNIT A					UNIT B				
	Zoning Requirement	Proposed	Proposed program	Proposed sft		Zoning Requirement	Proposed	Proposed program	Proposed sft
Lot Size	15999				Lot Size	3181			
Lot Coverage	6400	3892	Builing footprint	2400	Lot Coverage	2131	2056	Builing footpri	1200
			Parking	1236				Parking	772
			Path	256				Path	84
Lot Disturbance	8000	3892			Lot Disturbance	2664	2340		
Floor Area Max	6400	4800	Above grade	4800	Floor Area Max	1272	1250	Above grade	1250
			Basement	1600				Basement	1200
Building height	2 stories/ 35' max	2 stories+ba sement			Building height	2 stories/ 35' max	2 stories + basement		
Rear setback	30'	30'			Rear setback	30'	30'		
Front setback	30'	5'			Front setback	30'	5'		
Side interior setback	10'/ 7.5'	5'/5'			Side interior setback	10'/ 5'	5'/5		

UNIT C

Zoning Requirement	Proposed	Proposed program	Proposed sft
6652			
3459	3246	Builing footprin	1640
		Parking	1408
		Path	198
4324	3534		
2661	2660	Above grade	2660
		Basement	1640
2 stories/ 35' max	2 stories+ba sement		
30'	30'		
30'	5'		
10'/ 5'	5'/5'		
	Requirement 6652 3459 4324 2661 2 stories/ 35' max 30' 30'	Requirement Proposed 6652 3459 3459 3246 4324 3534 2661 2660 2 30' 30' 5'	RequirementProposedprogram665234593246Builing footprint34593246Builing footprintParkingParkingPathPath4324353426612660Above grade2Stories+ba sementBasement30'30'30'5'

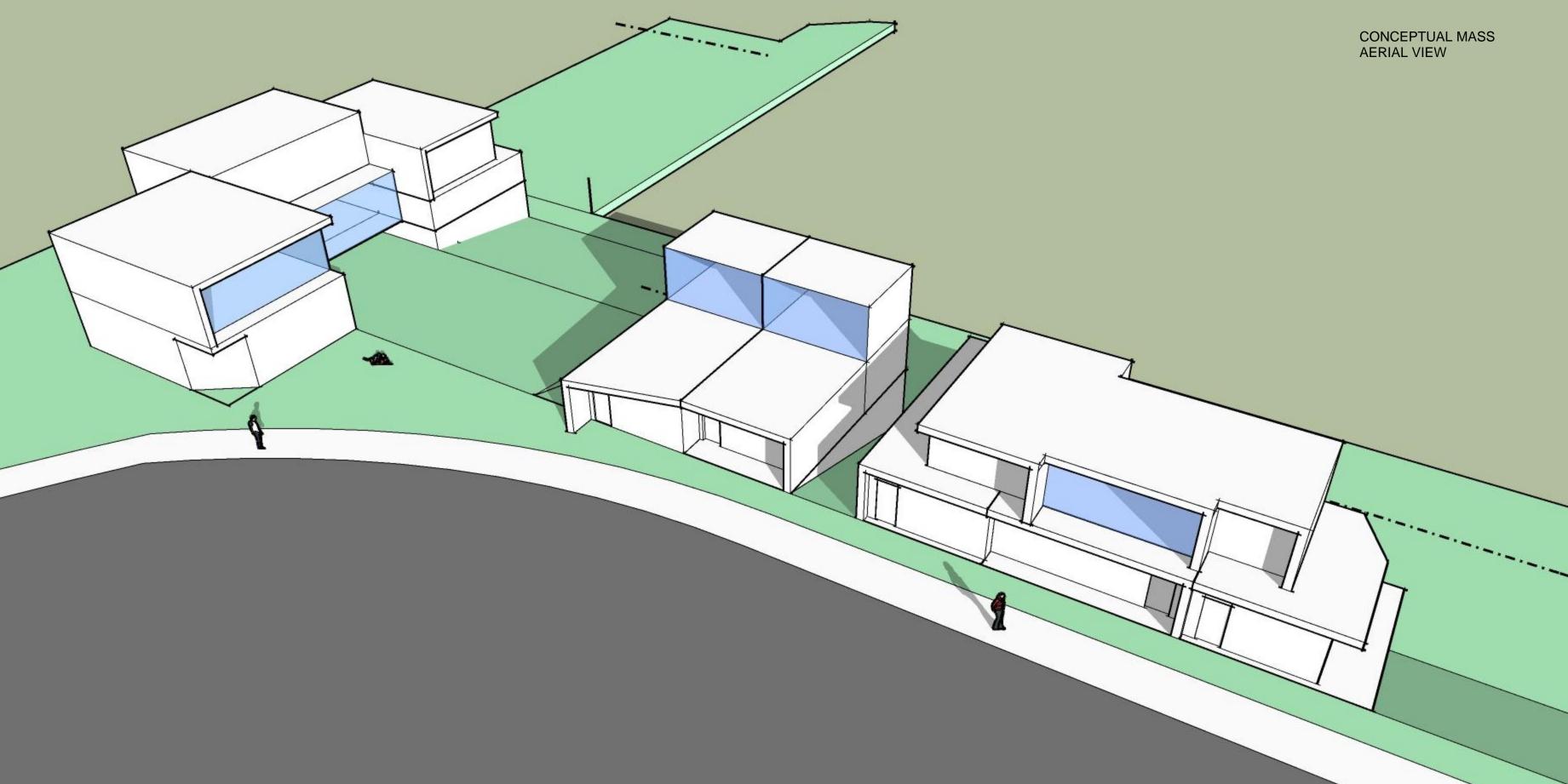


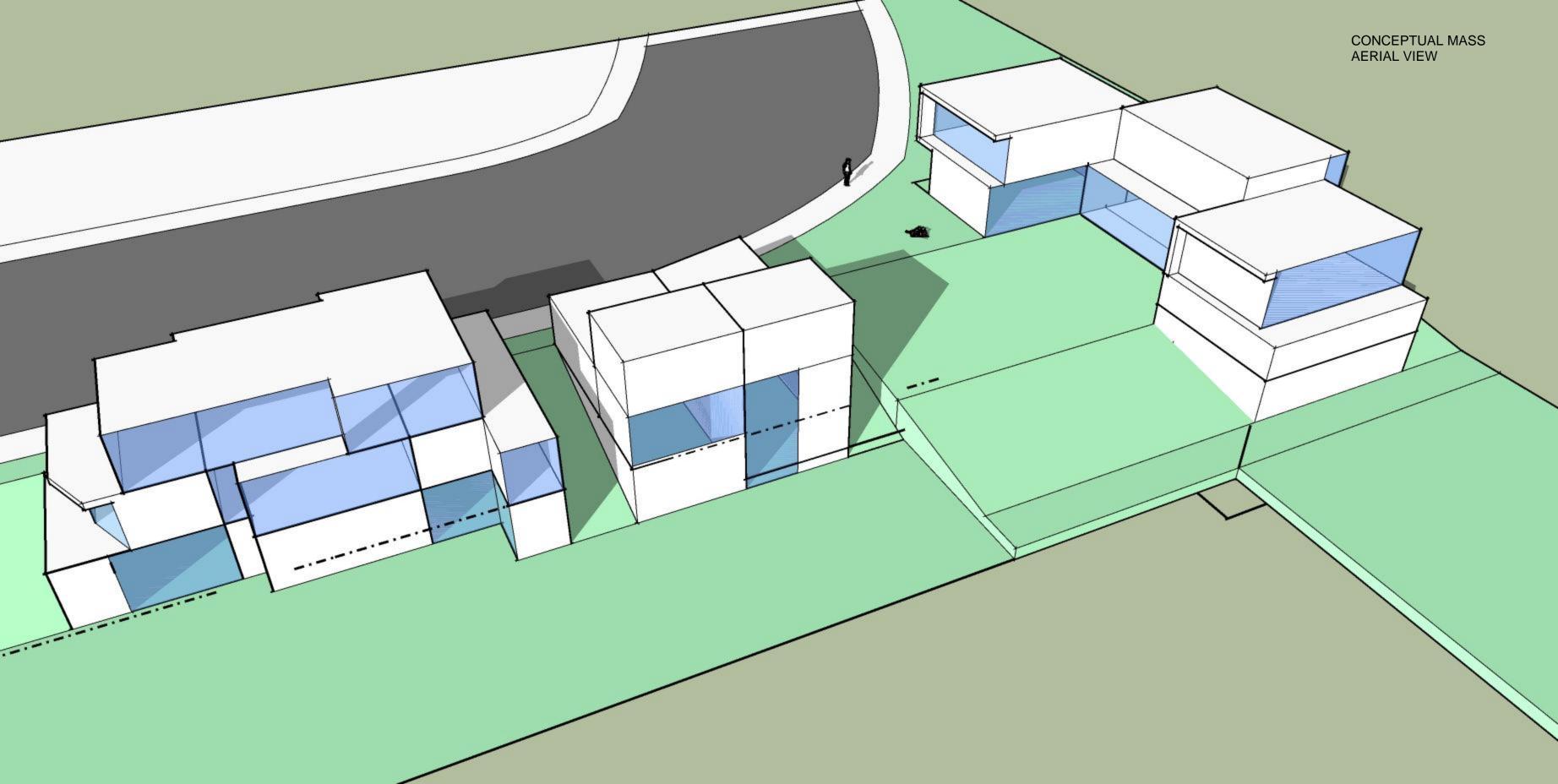
MEETS CURRENT ZONING REQUIREMENTS

VARIANCE APPLIED

MEETS CURRENT ZONING REQUIREMENTS

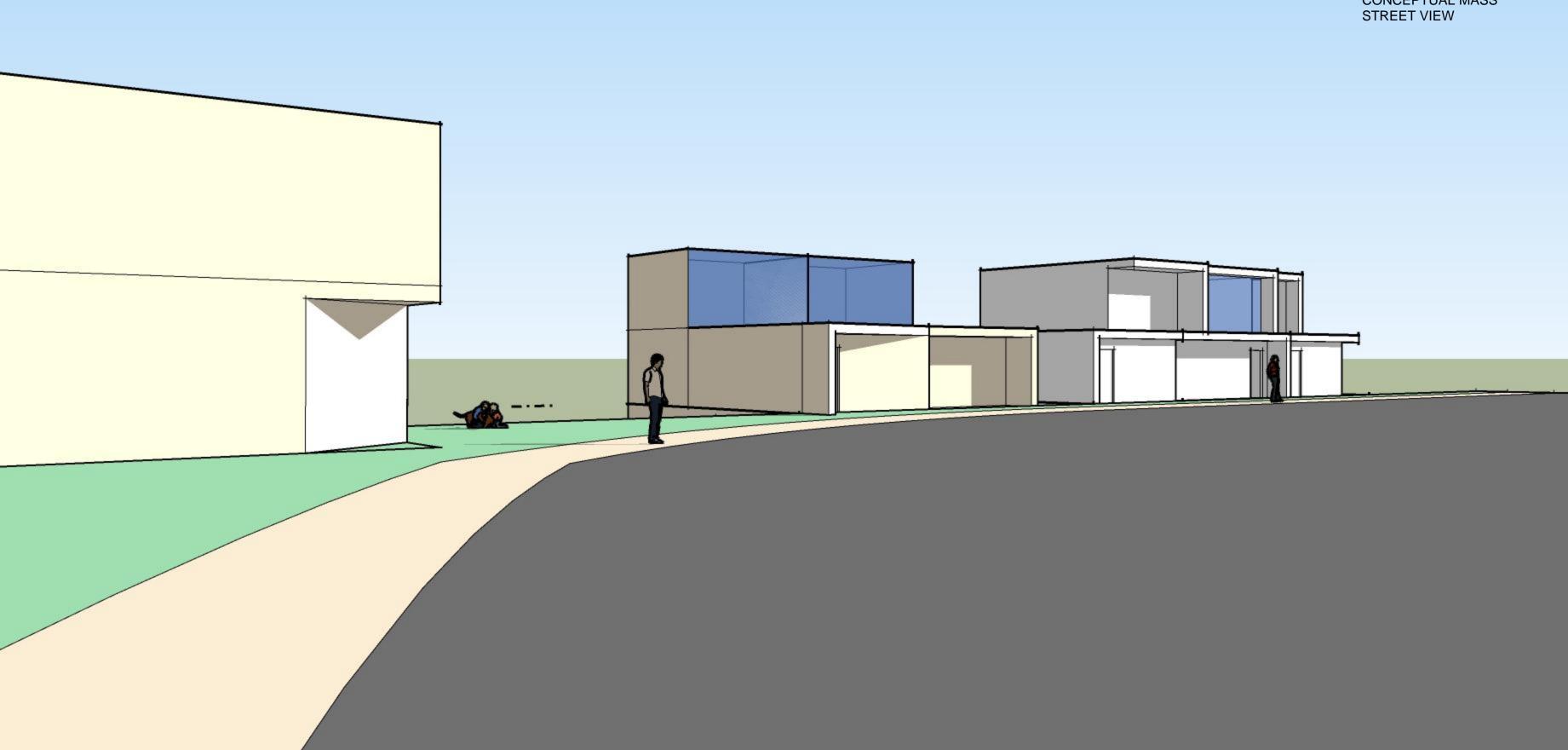
VARIANCE APPLIED







CONCEPTUAL MASS STREET VIEW



CONCEPTUAL MASS STREET VIEW

